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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SNAR](#) [MASS](#) [PREF](#) [EAID](#) [KJUS](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: INTELLIGENCE CAPACITY DIMINISHED BY LOSS OF FUNDING

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (S) The loss of the two airborne reconnaissance low (ARL) platforms due to funding constraints will have a critical impact on both U.S. and Colombian intelligence operations. The arrival of the "Shula Dragon" aircraft on July 15 offset requirements, but without either of the ARLs, our intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance capability has been reduced by 66 percent.

¶2. (S) Major General Fracica, who commanded Plan Patriota's Joint Task Force Omega, said the loss of ARL "could not have happened at a worse time," as the task force is surging to locate a reported FARC High Command meeting that includes Mono Jojoy and his Eastern and Southern Bloc Field commanders. Currently, one ARL platform will remain in country with very limited target engagement criteria. Missions can only be flown to locate U.S. hostages, to protect the U.S. military, and to protect President Uribe. MILGROUP has requested these criteria be eased to allow the ARL to participate in surge operations to locate FARC meeting areas, or that SOUTHCOM consider deploying an additional or alternative platform to support Plan Patriota IIB operations.

¶3. (C) With the reduction of deployments of Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha (SFODA) forces to Colombia, MILGROUP intends to provide operational planning assistance to the 18th BDE in Arauca with a PCS planning assistance training team (PATT) as opposed to the currently deployed Operational Detachment-B. This will provide continuity as the brigade trains, plans and conducts operations with the recently arrived helicopter package. Under this study, Operational Detachment-A would continue tactical training at Saravena and the permanent PATTs would assume the infrastructure security strategy (ISS) planning assistance role in Arauca.

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